

Report to Partnership Meeting 27 November 2015

RESEARCH AND STRATEGY DELIVERY

Oban Hub

Purpose of Report

To brief members on potential developments at Oban's Railway Pier.

Ferry Franchising

The refranchising of the CalMac CHFS services following the commencement of the Serco and ScotRail franchises provides an opportunity for looking the interchange experience at Oban, particularly as passenger numbers on all modes are growing very strongly. Oban was the location for last year's HITRANS/CalMac sponsored Integrated Transport Forum and a number of its shortcomings were discussed.

Meetings were held in 2013 with First ScotRail and Argyll and Bute Council about the need to improve the environment on the railway pier.

Oban 6.2

HITRANS has been working with Argyll & Bute on Oban transport issues for some time. In 2007 we began work on the case for more rail services- this happened in May 2014 when the train frequency was doubled, and stations enhanced to cope with an extra 130 pupils travelling to Oban High School from Dalmally, Loch Awe, Taynuilt and Connel Ferry. This was funded through the franchise continuation agreement between TS and First, extending the franchise by five months to March 15.

Meetings were held in 2013 with First ScotRail and Argyll and Bute Council in advance of the service enhancement about the need to improve the environment on the railway pier.

In 2009 options to improve interchange at Oban were explored in a report from Faber, recognising that ABC were embarking on the £30m CHORD programme for regenerating the waterfront towns of Campbeltown, Helensburgh, Oban, Rothesay and Dunoon. Please see Annexe below.

Public Realm

Recently a £2m Oban contract was let by ABC as part of this [to](#) Land Engineering which will cover the public realm improvements in Oban Waterfront area that will include improvements at Station Square. The design for Station Square provides a shared surface, flexible space for occasional events; a widened seaside footway; an improved shelter for bus passengers; flexible seating; ornamental planting; LED lighting similar to Stafford Street; like-for-like provision for taxis and a new plinth for the clock tower. Effectively these improvements will take place within the existing bus stance area and will not improve connectivity with the ferry terminal. It will

provide a significant improvement and immediate benefit for rail passengers at Oban. The expansion of Calmac traffic with the introduction of RET and a second Mull service soon after the rail enhancement, and smart ticketing initiatives on rail and bus provides a renewed focus for improving connectivity between modes.

Current progress

On the day the Cabinet were in Oban, HITRANS was asked to meet Oban and Lorn councillors to discuss how the Oban Hub could be reactivated. Brief discussions since have been held with the CMAL's Chief Executive, Abellio ScotRail and Network Rail all of whom indicated a keen interest in participating.

We are proposing to involve Professor Richard Laing, a Built Environment Visualisation specialist from RGU to assist with 3D interpretations of what may be possible. This will back feasibility work similar to what was done at Inverness under Platform4Change..

Key to the success of the project will be alignment with the current and future commercial requirements of Serco Caledonian Sleepers and Abellio ScotRail on the rail side, and those of CMAL and the successful CHFS bidder on the ferry side.

Future funding, including a bid to the Scottish Stations Fund, will need to be secured.

Recommendation

Members are asked to note the report. Risk	Impact	Comment
RTS delivery	√	This project fits well with a number of RTS Horizontal themes.
Policy	√	This project has integration and environmental benefits.
Financial	√	This project is fully funded
Equality	-	No impact on equalities issues.

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Date: 18 November 2015

Opportunities to improve interchange at Oban Transport Hub
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Improving journey times and connections is one of the three strategic outcomes of the National Transport Strategy. Argyll and Bute Council and its partners are keen to improve people's transport experience at one of the areas key transport interchanges – Oban.

Oban is an important transport hub, with links to the both the strategic road and rail network, and provides a gateway to many of Scotland's west coast islands. Oban has also recently developed air links to the islands of Coll, Colonsay and Tiree.

The purpose of this study was to explore the potential options to improve interchange at the Oban Transport Hub, thus providing a range of interventions that could be implemented as and when funding became available. The study provides initial recommendations for the short, medium and long term including the associated construction costs. At the outset of the study, it was not known if a full STAG appraisal would be required as the scale of the problem and the potential options were not fully defined. However it was expected that some interventions would be small scale and deliverable at a local level whilst others would be larger and likely to require funding at a wider level to be delivered.

In recognition that some of the larger interventions would require a full STAG appraisal, STAG principles were adopted with a quantification of the problems and opportunities. The study examined the current situation and then developed options that could be taken forward undertaking an assessment of the options against the 5 key government objectives. Throughout the study key stakeholders were engaged and gave valuable input to the process.

Existing situation

- Oban is the third largest town in Argyll and Bute, with a resident population of some 8,000 - which regularly triples during the summer months.
- Strategic road and rail links converge at the Oban Transport Hub which has a passenger throughput of around 850,000 passengers per annum.
- Frequent long distance coach services terminate at the Hub complementing local bus services

Thus, Oban is a heavily trafficked multi-modal interchange of regional and national importance.

Mode	Issue
Taxi	Existing rank is overcrowded leading to overflow into bus stances. Pedestrian / vehicle conflict.
Rail	Poor signage. Passengers are currently decanted on the landward platform – thus restricting their view of the ferry terminal and extending the walking distance. The two sidings to the north west of the rail tracks are currently underutilised.
Bus	Limited space available – leading to congestion and conflicts between taxi and bus. Same area used for local and long distance coach services.
Ferry	Limited space for vehicle marshalling with no scope for further development of ferry services. Construction of the second linkspan has increased the capacity for ferry services and consequently increased the need for further vehicle marshalling space.
Pedestrians	Safety issues – junctions, proximity of bus station and taxi rank, pedestrian / vehicle conflict.
Cyclists	Safety issues – traversing busy roads, exacerbated by on-street parking.
Parking	Shortage – both in close proximity to transport hub <i>and</i> in suitable long-stay parking.
Traffic	Congestion in Oban town centre impacts upon road transport access to the hub.